



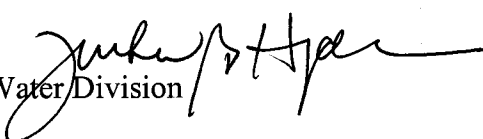
UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
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MAY 16 2008

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:  
WS-15J

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Report of Key Issues and Follow-up Activities Region 5/  
Region 7 Sustainable Water Infrastructure Forum

**FROM:** Tinka G. Hyde  
Acting Director, Water Division 

**TO:** James Hanlon, Director, Office of Wastewater Management, HQ  
Andy Crossland, Sustainable Infrastructure Coordinator, HQ  
William Spratlin, Director, Water Division, EPA Region 7

I am pleased to provide you with the attached Executive Summary of the proceedings from the Sustainable Infrastructure (SI) Forum which Region 5 co-hosted with Region 7 in St. Louis, Missouri on November 13 and 14, 2007. The Forum brought together 150 water infrastructure experts to share their experiences, perspectives, and innovative recommendations for advancing technical, operational, and financial SI strategies. The Forum has provided Region 5 with valuable direction as we implement our SI strategic plan, and I believe that the findings from the Forum should be incorporated into the SI efforts of EPA Headquarters and the other Regions.

The attached Executive Summary has been placed on the Region 5 SI website – [www.epa.gov/region5/water/si](http://www.epa.gov/region5/water/si) – along with a Summary Report of the key discussions held at the SI Forum, and a Detail Report that serves as a comprehensive record of the proceedings of the Forum. We will soon notify all Forum attendees that these reports and additional Forum materials are available on the Region 5 SI website.

I want to thank our partners in Region 7 and in the Office of Water, for the assistance they offered to make the SI Forum a success.

Attachment

cc: Regional SI Coordinators (via email)

# **U.S. EPA Regional Sustainability Infrastructure Forum**

## **U.S. EPA Region 5 and Region 7**

### **November 13 and 14, 2007 -- St. Louis, Missouri**

On November 13 and 14, 2007, U.S. EPA Regions 5 and 7 co-hosted the second of five Regional Sustainable Infrastructure Forums. The U.S. EPA Sustainable Infrastructure (SI) initiative raises awareness of water and wastewater infrastructure needs and promotes practices to ensure that water and wastewater infrastructure is properly operated and maintained, and that sufficient capital is available to fund future needs and interim replacements. The Region 5/7 Forum in St. Louis provided SI information to representatives from utilities (administrators and operators), academia, state and federal governments, consulting engineers, and other water infrastructure stakeholders. The Forum was also designed to accomplish its primary goal of gathering valuable feedback and insight from these water infrastructure experts regarding the challenges they have faced, the opportunities they have recognized, and the solutions they have implemented.

To elicit these insights, each Forum attendee selected one of the following four topic tracks, and then participated in a series of facilitated interactive group discussions that focused on that track:

- Developing new and innovative technical solutions, and advancing beneficial solutions into practice
- Extending the life of utilities through Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and Asset Management approaches
- Reducing utilities' future capital costs
- Identifying sustainability solutions for small utilities

The overall goal of the Forum was for U.S. EPA to assemble the SI solutions, approaches, and strategies that were generated in the track discussions into a suite of best practices that communities can access to inform the planning, design, financing, construction, and operation of their water and wastewater infrastructure. System managers, in coordination with their engineers, financing sources, contractors, and operators, will be able to examine this collection of best SI practices and select the most appropriate technical, operational, management, and financial solutions to affordably address the needs of their users.

#### **Key Recommendations for U.S. EPA**

The facilitated discussions among Forum participants yielded four key recommendations for U.S. EPA action:

- U.S. EPA must facilitate the development and implementation of new SI solutions through ideas through education, outreach, research, and technical assistance.
- U.S. EPA must provide technical assistance and training to small systems seeking to develop and implement environmental management systems and asset management plans, to ensure that systems are run as efficiently as possible.

- U.S. EPA must recognize that each utility has distinctive needs, and must address those needs with strategies tailored to its specific circumstances. Smaller systems, in particular, must be offered potential SI tools and solutions that are both effective and practical in the context of their volume of activity and their financial, managerial, and operational capacity.
- U.S. EPA must take an active leadership role in promoting the value of water services, and must support regional and local education and outreach efforts that communicate to the public how local funding is necessary to build and maintain sound water infrastructure that protects public health.

### **Track-Specific Actions for U.S. EPA**

In addition to these four key recommendations, the discussions also generated a great deal of track-specific information about the obstacles, opportunities, and solutions that Forum participants have encountered, and yielded several actionable next steps for U.S. EPA.

#### **Track Topic: Developing new and innovative technical solutions, and advancing beneficial solutions into practice**

U.S. EPA should enhance communications related to new and emerging technologies so as to foster research, testing, and implementation of innovative technical equipment and processes, achieve cost-effective economies of scale more quickly, limit financial risks to early adopters, and streamline necessary review and approval by regulatory agencies.

#### **Track Topic: Extending the life of utilities through Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and Asset Management approaches**

U.S. EPA should provide technical assistance and training to small systems seeking to develop and implement environmental management systems and asset management plans, to ensure that systems are run as efficiently as possible.

#### **Track Topic: Reducing utilities' future capital costs**

U.S. EPA should maximize economies of scale through regional planning and by providing communities with decision-making tools that contemplate growth and changing infrastructure needs, promote the development of analytical tools to more accurately model lifecycle costs and the performance of infrastructure assets, and develop and support efforts to raise public awareness of the value of water services.

#### **Track Topic: Identifying sustainability solutions for small utilities**

U.S. EPA should encourage small systems to consolidate with larger systems to improve water quality and/or reduce costs, expand technical and Asset Management training resources for small system operators, and promote the Operator Certification Expense Reimbursement Grants Program and the State Revolving Funds (SRF).